

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method of copy protecting optical discs uses the differences in capability between the encoder associated with a laser beam recorder and that in currently available CD writers. Digital sum value (DSV) is a property of the encoded data on CDs and an encoder, which controls a laser beam recorder may be able to choose a pattern of merge bits which result in the overall DSV having optimal properties. During mastering of a CD, data patterns are added to the disc to provide an authenticating signature. These data patterns are chosen to cause DSV problems. Currently available CD writers have been found to have difficulty writing an authenticating signature of the type described without producing a resulting CD which has severe readability problems. Thus, the copy disc written by the CD writer will result in a CD reader returning corrupted data or information signalling a read error.